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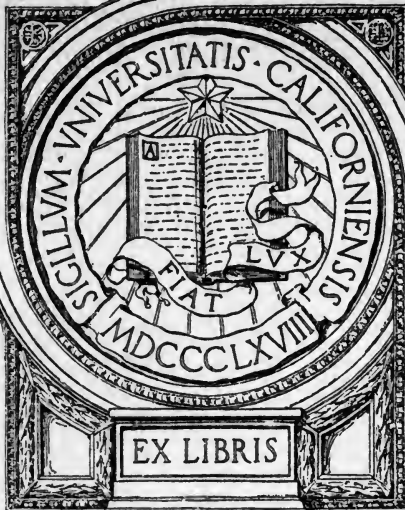


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THE AGATE LAMP

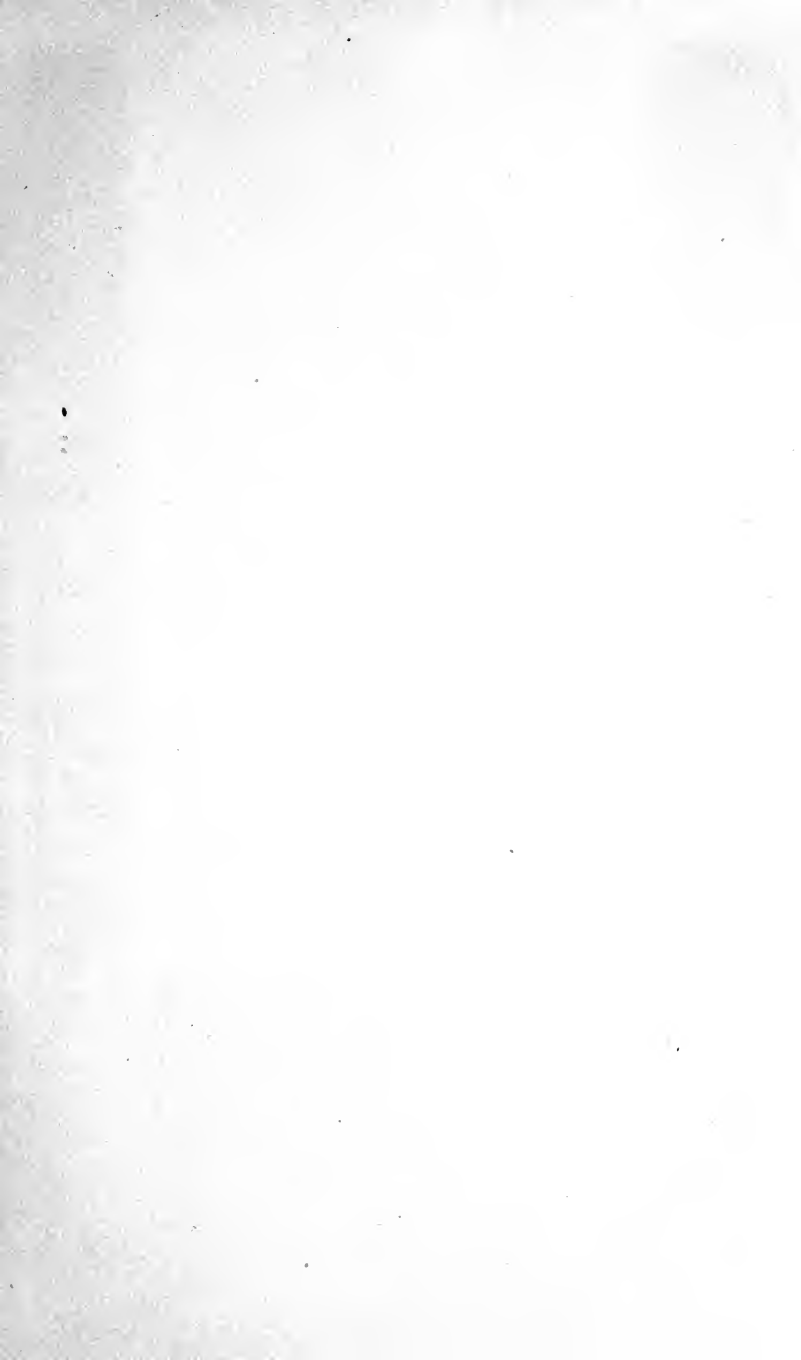


GIFT OF
Knights of St. Patrick



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THE AGATE LAMP

“The agate lamp within thy hand,
Ah ! Psyche, from those regions which
Are holy land.”

E. A. POE.

C'est un phare allumé sur mille citadelles,
Un appel de chasseurs perdus dans les grands bois.

BAUDELAIRE

THE AGATE LAMP

BY
EVA GORE-BOOTH



LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA

1912

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Knights of St. Patrick

TO VMMU
ADPCHLAD



How is it doomed to end ?
Shall I, when I come again,
Watch the old sun in a new eclipse,
Breathe the same air with different lips,
Think the same thoughts with a different
 brain,
With a new heart love the same old friend ?

How shall I hold the thread ?—
The brittle thread of the past,
On through the terrible maze—
The labyrinth of lost days—
A pilgrim through tireless centuries vast,
Where one dreams with the living and sleeps
 with the dead ?

What is there that will not change
That I can recognise ?

B

The sun, and the wind, and the April rain,
And the wild sea's shining plain—
The ancient joy in the world's young eyes—
The blue hills' dim eternal range?

Ah! there are other things
That shall not fade—
The painter's dream, the poet's thought,
The calm-browed Muse in marble wrought—
Pan's pipes out of dry reeds at twilight
made—
And Orpheus' lute, and Niké's wind-blown
wings.

THE AGATE LAMP

LEONARDO DA VINCI

He in his deepest mind
That inner harmony divined
That lit the soul of John,
And in the glad eyes shone
Of Dionysos, and dwelt
Where Angel Gabriel knelt
Under the dark cypress spires ;
And thrilled with flameless fires
Of Secret Wisdom's rays
The Giaconda's smiling gaze ;
Curving with delicate care
The pearls in Beatrice d'Esté's hair ;

Hiding behind the veil
Of eyelids long and pale,
In the strange gentle vision dim
Of the unknown Christ who smiled on
him.

His was no vain dream
Of the things that seem,
Of date and name.

He overcame

The Outer False with the Inner True,
And overthrew

The empty show and thin deceits of sex,
Pale nightmares of this barren world that
vex

The soul of man, shaken by every breeze
Too faint to stir the silver olive trees
Or lift the Dryad's smallest straying tress
Frozen in her clear marble loveliness.

He, in curved lips and smiling eyes,
Hid the last secret's faint surprise
Of one who dies in fear and pain
And lives and knows herself again.
He, in his dreaming under the sun,
Saw change and the Unchanging One,
And built in grottos blue a shrine
To hold Reality Divine.

SANO DI PIETRO

(SIENA)

Floating in pale-rose waves the sun has set,
Slowly on silver feet doth twilight glide
Among the hills, flooding with violet
Those marble mountains where the gods
 abide.

Here Sano's lingering dim Madonnas hold
The sky and all its stars and mysteries,
In their strange robes of shadowy blue and
 gold.

Here voices haunt the twisted olive trees
With magic whispers of a far-off goal,
Where fortune finds, beyond her turning
 wheel,
All light and colour in the radiant soul.

Here with the sunset's all-enfolding dream
Harsh lines and broken curves do blend and
cease.

Lo the hoar olives on the mountains
gleam—

The hills grow pale with that white dream
of peace.

Ah, let no sob of pain, nor bitter cry,
The fragile robe of beauty rend or soil!
Slay not the smallest creature doomed to
die,

The fruit of million weary years of toil.
Here, in this little city on the height,
Hatred and sorrow into shadow blend,
Deep in rose marble sinks the evening
light,

And all things come to beauty at the
end.

Of days to come, here might one dream
awhile—

How men were gentle and had ceased to
kill,

How Sano dead such years ago would
smile,

To find the world grown lovely with good-
will.

RODIN'S CARYATIDES

Poor weary mortal crushed beneath the
weight

Of the harsh stone, with muscles strained
and tense,

And limbs all wrenched and torn and
dislocate,

Writhing beneath the stony load immense.

Thine is the strife and struggle of our age,

On heavy labour and hard toil intent,

The fury of fierce dreams and blinding
rage,

Thou art of all weak souls the monument.

Ah, let us go to where glad peace divine,
On many an ancient sun-warmed marble
gleams,

The sorrow of all pitiful deeds is thine—
Our deeds that are not sisters to our dreams.

From thee we turn to those divinely fair
And marble-soulèd Caryatides,
Who bore great walls like garlands in their
hair,
And smiled beneath the carven temple-
frieze.

Oh, long ago, in lost Hellenic hours,
That heavy burden did but lightly press
On the calm patient brows of austere
powers,
Terrible in their unmoved loveliness.

“ ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS ”

(By DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO)

The pale Madonna, radiant and serene,
Smiles the long summer hours in peace
away,

Where the child lies on the bird-haunted
green,

Nor heeds the patient folk who come to pray.

So this was Ghirlandajo, eager-eyed,
Who had not seen the hidden light in vain,
With those sad shepherds from the far
hillside

He, sleepless, under the white stars had
lain.

And he who smiles as he gives thanks to
God,

With humble gaze serene and kindly just,
He then was that Magnificent¹ who trod
The liberties of Florence in the dust.

Nay, no dark soul of proud and evil mind
Was he who round the stiff lamb folds his
arm,

A gentle labourer, most wise and kind,
No tyrant ever knew his gracious calm.

And he had listened to the Thracian's song,
And seen the grey light of Athene's eyes ;
And for his joy the gracious white-limbed
throng
Of laughing nymphs did from the marble
rise.

¹ Lorenzo de' Medici.

ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS 13

The little golden daisies, silver-rayed,
Were dear to him as the great golden
sun,

And he who bent before the Holy Maid
Saw in the Many glimpses of the One.

Thus be it said of him : Here was a man
Whose faith in God was very deep and
wide,

Yet did he keep a little shrine for Pan,
And wise Athene by his heart's wayside.

The friend of all things lovely and sincere,
This pale Madonna kneeling on her knees
Dwelt in his heart's deep twilight silver-
clear,

Where white gods gleamed among the olive
trees.

And all the shining forms of joy and grief,
And every broken dream of truth divine,
Were to his soul the reaped golden sheaf
And garnered treasure of the Eternal Shrine.

Yea, this was rather one who comraded
With Plato, one who loved all visions fair ;
The shepherd who the angels' warning
read—

Peace upon earth and beauty everywhere.

The pale Madonna, lost to mortal things,
Still through the long-drawn silence kneels
to pray,

Meanwhile the grand procession of the
Kings

Comes glittering down the winding mountain
way.

DAVID

IN THE BARGELLO

This was the shepherd boy who slung the
stone

And killed the giant ; sunshine and the wind
Had given his harp so clear and strange a
tone

That all the world forgave him when he
sinned.

The gently formed and stately Greek who
stood

On the Piazza, throned in classic pride,
Was not the boy who roamed through field
and wood,

Fighting and singing on the bright hillside.

Swift on the mountains, swift to save or
slay ;

Eager and passionate, and lithe of form ;
Fighting and singing, pausing but to pray
Unto his God of music and of storm.

The bare hillside and sharp rocks castellate
Rang with the clanging of his restless bow ;
Where, in the dawn of the world's love and
hate,
He found and would not slay his sleeping
foe.

No sorrowful shadow of the evil years
Falls on this boy's face of the wood and wild ;
Vanished are rage and lust and passionate
tears ;
The king is dead, immortal stands the child.

THE DAWN

(MICHELANGELO)

Not as Aurora of the smiling eyes
And rosy fingers doth this dawn awake ;
Neither, like Aphrodite, doth she rise
From the bright waves, all silver for her sake.
Rather is she the Image in the Soul,
The beautiful young dawn of all things fair,
Who wakes in a dark world of gloom and
dole,

Wrapped in the marble coldness of despair.
Thou sorrowful Dawn invincible, alone,
Pale sleeper, from thy long rest turn aside ;
Four hundred years of slumber hast thou
known ;

Long broken is that Florentine's fierce pride

That held thee tranced through years of
storm and stress ;

Oh, buried in the marble calm and cold,
Wake thou, the world is full of heaviness,
And men have need of beauty, as of old.

ANGELS OF THE INCARNATION

(BOTTICELLI)

These are those brows no life or death has
 marred—

The wistful eyes and wingèd forms that
 guard

The fortress of our thoughts, too dim and
 frail

To hide from us the shadowy faces pale
Mourning outside the cloudy-pillared gate,
To some mysterious sorrow consecrate.
Sad angel faces that the Florentine
Madewistful with strange longing more divine
Than any ghastly arrow-ridden saint,
Or God Himself (whom Angelo did paint

High in the Sistine, which may God forgive)
Who shews Himself in swift gleams fugitive,
And dwelling in the world's deep heart
unseen,
Shines through the thin veil of the spring's
young green,
And the breaking wave, and the shadowy
wind,
And the opal dream in the painter's mind.
These Angels in their pale arrested flight,
Flooding with rays of a mysterious light
The lilies in the twilight garden cool
And great stars shining in a little pool,—
Ah shadowy angels, ye are they that weep
Beside the waters flowing still and deep
Above our dreams, hiding, since time began,
God's sunken image in the soul of man.

ATHENE (RESTORED)

Hers is the patient waiting of the wise
Who beareth all things, e'en the clownish fist
Of lumpy restorations that disguise
The delicate clear carving of the wrist.

Yet o'er her form that vacuous face, intent
Its ancient holiness to desecrate,
Casts not a shadow of disfigurement ;
For beauty is no passive toy of fate.

The tireless light of her undaunted dreams,
Above all littleness of heart and brain,
Through simple curves and patient carving
gleams
In a white mystery of peace and strain.

Athene triumphs, deathless and divine :
She waits her wisdom's hour, the end of all.
The eternal glory of the gracious line
Flows through the heavens, though the great
stars fall.

SILENZIA

(BERNARDINO LUINI)

Deep buried dreams dwell in her laughing
eyes ;

She holds one finger on her lips close
pressed :

Hers are no solemn phrases of the wise ;
Smiling, she hides a secret in her breast.

Treasure is hers, she has great joy of it,
Nor cares that men should count her vain
and gay,

No thought has power her gentle brow to
knit

Or turn her red-gold hair to anxious gray.

Hers is no frown on the world's outer
things

Who in the deeps of silent wisdom knows
The meaning folded in the wild bird's wings,
Wrapped in the curvéd petals of the rose.

The love of all things, in that peace unknown,
Has wrapped her round through centuries
of strife ;

And wisdom slowly into joy has grown :
An oft-returning guest, she smiles on life.

Faithful to earth through crowding ages
past,

Her eyes, grown gentle to the things she sees,
Shrink not from the deep Quiet and the
Vast :

Her lips are shut on many memories.

THE ANNUNCIATION

(LEONARDO DA VINCI)

Through silver twilight, lily-laden, came
The Angel unto Mary. Everywhere
Small flowers lit the grass with gleams of
 flame,
Between those two, in the pale evening air.

It was the gentle hour of violet light,
The Angel smiled and sank upon his knees ;
Darkly athwart the marble terrace white
Fell the chill shadow of the cypress trees.

ANGELS OF THE PASSION

(BOTTICELLI)

Are not these they, who, since the world
 uprose,
Out of the darkness haunt man's desolate
 fate,
Who knows not whence he comes or where
 he goes,
Or if he is the child of love or hate ?

Their tirèd eyes and pitiful faces pale,
With wistful passion and long weeping
 spent,
Keep watch about our sorrows, and avail
To throng with mysteries the steep ascent.

ANGELS OF THE PASSION 27

The riddle of the ancient world looks
out
Of their strange faces ; sighing do they
spoil
Man's triumphs with the shadow of their
doubt,
And gently bring to nought his passionate
toil.

Ah pitiful angels, since the world
began,
And from the rock flowed forth time's
bitter stream,
You have brought sorrow to the soul of
man,
Knowing his purpose other than his
dream.

You hold the harsh nails and the crown of
thorns

In trembling hands, waiting with patient
eyes,

Through the long waste of many-coloured
morns,

The white dawn of the eternal truth's sun-
rise.

THE EVERLASTING HERETIC

(A WOUNDED AMAZON IN ROME)

In age-long silence patiently she stands,
Hiding deep in her wounded breast of
stone

The secret of her lifted arms and hands
Raised by a lost dream to a deed
unknown.

The world's first heretic and questioner
Of the dark instincts, this was her reward—
Red fire that burned the very heart of
her—

She took the sword and perished by the
sword.

The wild world went its way, since her
harsh breath

Failed on the air, the wandering soul of
man

Has passed from faith to faith, from death
to death

Seeking through centuries the ultimate
Pan.

She, through the storm of breaking dreams,
wind-built,

Has seen religions fail and empires
fall,

Whilst through the ages blood in torrents
spilt

Has blurred the secret writing on the
wall.

THE EVERLASTING HERETIC 31

She has seen temples burned and faiths
recede,

Catching swift gleams athwart the glare of
strife

Through the torn rift in every world-worn
creed,

Of that brave purpose buried under life.

The centuries passing on their way, con-
signed

The world that conquered her to dust and fire,
They are but shadows shut out of her mind :
Eternal doubter of the world's desire.

Again and yet again, through the long years,
She hears the confident clear voice of youth
Unfold the secret of all joys and fears,
Claiming a captive in the chainless Truth,

Who silently eludes the feverish grasp
And desperate glamour of that fierce embrace;
For the sad soul of man outgrows his grasp,
And dreams but soothe him for a little space.

Oh, secret of the world and far-off goal
Of that long road that life's first pilgrim trod,
Most dear art thou unto the rebel soul,
Herself grown lovelier than her dream-built
God.

Surely we dream, this calm-browed
Amazon,
Whose will was like a great stream at the
flood,
In whose fierce eyes the light of battle
shone—
Shaker of iron laws, shedder of blood—

THE EVERLASTING HERETIC 33

She whose hard deeds and gentle thoughts
once braved

The swords of men, and all the world's dark
powers—

Now on her marble brow holds deep
engraved

The secret of a nobler will than ours.

Her soul aloof from our wild wayfaring,
No more the bitter pilgrim of a day,
Has found the goal of every swallow's wing,
Her marble peace smiles on our broken clay.

Thus doth the harsh defeated beauty, spent
In the lost battle, all sweet dreams out-
shine—

Soul of the white force and the sheer ascent,
Wounded, implacably at peace, divine.

THE FISHERMEN

(By HOLMAN HUNT)

Though they live in a fairy land
Homely people are they,
Dragging their nets o'er the sand
Of the opal and luminous bay.
There are prizes and honours to win
In the world as of old,
And they watch for a silver fin
In a sea of gold.

Those who read the signs of the skies
Make haste to crowd on sail,
And all men born who are wise
Get home before the gale.

This is the world's desire—
This is the fisherman's goal—
The lamp and the cottage fire,
And shelter and ease of soul.
Ah, but the voice in the wind
The call of the glittering wave ?
Better an easy mind,
Long life, and a grassy grave !
Thus the sunset glory in vain
Rose flashes over the bay :
To the village safe in the plain
Unmoved they take their way.
Alas these fishermen so blind
May that wise God forgive,
Who hides in dreams from all mankind
The light by which they live.

DIVINA COMMEDIA

“ In la sua volontade è nostra pace.”—DANTE.

These things have passed ; no more through
twilight hours,
In that dark Eden of the coloured May,
On the brown river's bank among the
flowers,
Countess Mathilda takes her painted way.

And little red anemones, and white
Narcissus seem to dream in vain,
Of the blue sky and the sun's gentle
light
And the lost streams of the far Tuscan
plain.

Now long forgotten is that wood serene
Where Lethe's moonless waters onward glide,
Bending the ragged blades of grass that lean
Forth from the green bank underneath the
tide.

Noble Piccarda's pearly brows divine
Holding the secret of the world-old rune,
Like a fair jewel in a carven shrine
Trouble no more the white ways of the
moon.

Long mute is Cavalcanti's broken prayer ;
The smile of Beatrice, to earth denied,
Shines now no more on Saturn's golden
stair ;
Through no sad town shall Virgil be our
guide.

Along the dark ravine, in single file,
Monks of Bologna now no longer tread
The weary mazes of the dismal aisle,
Beneath the torment of the cowls of lead.

No flaming tomb can smother down the
chords
Of the new music delicately harsh,
Beyond the glint of crowns, the clash of
swords,
And the lost horror of the blood-stained
marsh.

For we, men say, have lost our heaven and go
Along dim valleys shadowed everywhere,
Far from the hills where, glittering, the white
snow
Yet stabs with cruel knives the sunny air.

As Dante's fierce God, throned in love and
light

Yet pierced the hearts of gentle folk and kind,
And drove out gracious Virgil from his sight
And turned to bitterness the sunny wind.

We sigh where Dante sang, our hungry eyes
Grown weary of the angels' flaming wings,
Have made a rainbow heaven of tears and
sighs,
And the sea's voice, and pale and sorrowful
things.

We sigh where Dante sang—thus have we
found

His poor lost people on that open road,
That leads through marsh and fire and
broken ground

Unto the ultimate divine abode.

Piccarda triumphs in that dream of hers
That bitter grief and outrage had not slain,
The secret that the world's soul shakes and
stirs,

That Dante sought through conquered
stars in vain.

And Beatrice,—vanished is the shining
sphere

And saints' high throne above the world apart,
Yet with us dwells the dream divine and dear
That folds in beauty every living heart.

The heaven time brings us shall not be too
strait

For pale Francesca ; only broken bars
Lie prone where once was hid, by the sad gate,
“The love that moved the sun and the
other stars.”

A love grown wide enough for Plato's dream
And Homer's story ; not too cramped to
hold

Those pilgrim souls, by Acheron's sad
stream,

For ever shut out of the barrèd fold.

Death without glory, heaven without wings
Or angels, bright hopes overthrown,
We sigh where Dante sang, our wanderings
Have brought us to the gate of life
unknown.

No heaven is ours of lights and whirling
flame—

For dying warriors a starlit goal—
But a lost country called by a new name,
Deep buried in dim valleys of the soul.

A gentle land where the white singing waves
Move softly under silver twilight skies,
And life with her fierce wars and dreadful
 graves
Seems but a little wind that falling sighs.

No painful voice makes pitiful that wind,
All bitter dreams sleep in the quiet vale
Where, out of clashing darkness fierce and
 blind,
A new dawn glimmers gently, olive-pale.

The poet's laurel and the martyr's palm
Wither, the old enchantments fade and
 cease ;

Yet still the vision of the ancient calm
Folds, round this weary world, wide wings
 of peace.

And all men passing down beneath the
boughs

Of the dim forest to the magic sea
Mysterious have felt against their brows
The buffet of the ancient mystery.

A drift of scattered spray, a fallen leaf,
Bear witness to that strange and unseen
wind

That drives the high tide over shoal and
reef

And lonely beaches of moon-haunted mind.

The light that passes, with a sudden thrill,
The moonlight's glamour and the twilight's
gleam—

Waking beyond our world of good and ill
The sleeping purpose underneath the dream.

The ray of cold reality austere,
Shining beyond the gates of joy or dole,
That to the eyes of sorrow shall make clear
The hidden dweller in the darkened soul.

For whose sake Dante by the convent door,
Sure of his golden heaven at close of day,
When the monk asked what he was seeking
for,
Answered but "Peace" and went upon his
way.

Shrinking from dreadful creeds of storm and
stress
And dreams of passionate wrath, bitter and
blind,
To seek in his own soul for gentleness
And find the Divine in a comrade's mind.

As one who knew the inner unseen tide
Of beauty beating up against the walls
At evening, breaking down their coloured
pride

When all things are as one, and twilight falls.

This was his grief, shut behind iron bars,
Roaming through darkened rooms in sunless
towers—

His soul yet caught a glamour from the stars
And knew the dauntless will of the wild
flowers.

The captive soul of gentleness in him
Looked out through narrowed windows,
passion-blurred ;
Yet through the darkness of his prison dim
The far faint voices of the rain were heard.

With them he trysted outside heaven's gate
Who mould the gracious word and carve the
stone,

To thrust aside one moment love and hate
And gaze into the eyes of the Unknown.

For he was one of those sad souls who
wrought

Life into glory, marble into form,
And carved across the brows of human
thought

The Eternal Beauty's pale and frozen storm.

Now that the sunshine has quenched all his
fire

And time has swept his narrow gates apart,
We lean across the sundering ages dire
To greet the dreamer of the pitiless heart,

Knowing the Infinite Quiet, pale and vast,
Floats round his dreams, as the dark tide
floats round

The loud green waves that rise and thunder
past

And sink to rest in silent seas profound.

LUCIFERA

Oh, tired of many lives and many dooms,
Breaker of waves and shedder of all
tears

Staggering beneath the weight of the world's
years,

Builder of cities, hewer out of tombs,
What though thy torch, amid these ancient
glooms,

Burns dimly in a flicker of hopes and
fears,

Casting pale shadows on the shining
spheres

From that lost verge where giant darkness
looms—

Yet is the secret of all beauty thine,
Oh, mother of many sorrows ! Thou art still
Witness of peace and the one light divine ;
Shedder of rays, yet the dark secret will
Of troubled waters in this soul of mine,
And bright cloud shadows on the blue-
lit hill.

FORM

The buried statue through the marble
gleams,
Praying for freedom, an unwilling guest,
Yet flooding with the light of her strange
dreams
The hard stone folded round her uncarved
breast.

Founded in granite; wrapped in serpentine,
Light of all life and heart of every storm,
Doth the uncarven image, the Divine,
Deep in the heart of each man, wait for form.

THE INNER EGERIA

Once long ago in this dim wood
The Wise Nymph of the shining stream
Before the dreaming Numa stood,
Her clear voice mingled with his dream.

At Rome amongst the ilex glooms
When all the world waits for the spring,
And while the early crocus blooms,
She whispered wise words to the King.

Though Rome be far as Nineveh
From the dark road my feet must tread,
Yet do I meet her every day—
Salt on my cheek her tears are shed.

Nymph of the stream of life, she hides
In that small sacred wood apart,
Where the enchanted king abides
And the first flowers bloom in my heart.

THE DEATH OF ORPHEUS

One was the undivided Holy Light
When those wild wills found Orpheus on
the plain,
And tore apart the rhythmic limbs and white,
Thus was the music of the whole world slain,
Thus was the deed of devastation done
And broken rays split from the wingèd sun.

Soft music lingers through sea-scented days
And songs can harden coward hearts to
war,
And streams with sweet sounds fill the wild
wood ways
And the waves chant on every broken shore ;

But the lost music's secret strain and
thrill

Shall break no more the heart of each
green hill.

The west wind rustles through green leaves
and brown ;

The white clouds sail along the chanting
breeze ;

On the glad grass the rain comes singing
down,

Piercing through green boughs of unbending
trees ;

And all these singers mourn the great dream
fled,

The music of the world broken and
dead.

THE DEATH OF ORPHEUS 55

Now do swift gleams and shining circles
float

In each bright stream that glitters on the
wind ;

And ever and anon a sudden note,
Harsh in the singing, brings the dead to
mind.

Lost rhythms sigh in every wind that
blows,

And sleep in the curved petals of the rose.

Yea, at the twilight hour when white waves
break

On silver shores under the rose-lit blue,
The world is hushed awhile for Orpheus' sake,
And the lost music of the Wise and True
Her rainbow arch across the silence flings,
And to the sun gives pale translucent wings.

Faithful are all things to that Holy One ;
There is no traitor under the blue skies.
Beyond all golden dreams and deeds once
done

The memory of the Eternal Beauty lies,
And buried deep beneath the grass and
fern

The fires of the Eternal Beauty burn.

Thou who didst lift the mountain from the
vale

With song, and drag the red rose from her
root,

And o'er the secret herbs and stones prevail,
Amongst the hemlock lies thy broken lute ;
Nor shall the echoes of that singing cease,
Nor any tree, nor wind, nor wave, have
peace.

THE DEATH OF ORPHEUS 57

Children of Dionysos, ye were strong
To shatter all the tense strings of the lyre,
To break the fierce line of the embattled
 song,
To wreck the boat that held the Eternal
 Fire :
For the one Light ye gave us many gleams,
For the one Dream a host of shining dreams.

THE IMMORTAL SOUL

Pure gold did Nero's palace shine,
O'er mighty ships the Eagles soared,
Lord of the world was Constantine,
Of a lost dream was Julian lord.

The eagles passed on blood-stained wings,
Blurred is the broken marble's pride,
Yet fair amongst immortal things
Did that rejected dream abide.

The golden house has passed away,
And sunk is every fierce trireme ;
The conquered dreamer men could slay,
No man could conquer the proud dream.

The trumpets, mute for many days,
Call forth no more the embattled host ;
And Cæsar, in his crown of bays,
Is but a weak and wandering ghost.

Yet amongst columns overthrown
Of the white vestal temple fair,
A Pilgrim from the far unknown
Breathes here once more the golden air.

Once more in Rome she takes her rest
Holding from the great life outcast,
Safe in a little human breast,
The august secret of the past.

Into her hands in ages gone
The great dreams of the spirit fell—
From life to life she hands them on
Inviolatè, invincible.

No great thought crumbles with the hours,
No dreams decay, no gods grow old.

Though broken are the temple towers,
Shall not our hearts those shrines enfold ?

We look at life with our new eyes,
The ancient spirit in us stirs,
Piercing the flimsy fresh disguise
Wrapped round that secret past of hers.

Each Soul holds all the oracles—
In a few years, to every man
Who hears her gentle voice, she tells
Life's mysteries since time began.

Like a child playing in the grass
On through the wind-blown sunny hours,
The patient ages as they pass
But fill her lap with fallen flowers.

The golden asphodel that shone
Beyond dim Hades' gate of glooms ;
Great dreams of Tyre and Babylon,
And pale Egyptian lotus blooms ;

Green laurels from the victor's car ;
Deep Syrian roses, white and red ;
And that pale scented Eastern star,
The jasmine flower that crowns the dead.

All these are hers, who, weeping strange,
Deep in the heart of hearts abides,
And all the woes of time and change
Beneath our joys and sorrows hides.

Glad is she through the centuries
With each new morning's golden air,
Beneath all beauty she is wise,
Beyond all wisdom she is fair.

Once in the brave lost dawn of time
She watched, with an exultant thrill,
The crownèd victor's chariot climb
Int riumph the steep sacred hill.

Now the low wail of death and grief
She hears in every trumpet call ;
She shudders, at the falling leaf,
Who saw Troy burn and Carthage fall.

To her the conqueror's battle-cry
Is as a doomèd army's moan,
She has seen thousands fail and die—
Alas, the soul grows wise alone.

Veiled watcher in the deeps unseen,
Thou ancient childlike soul of mine,
Life after life hast thou not been
The priestess of a crumbling shrine ?

As vestals in a city marred
By war and famine, change and fate,
Through the long centuries could guard
The dreams of Rome inviolate :

So has she held in her long trust
The wisdom and the fire of earth ;
She stands between us and the dust,
From death to death, from birth to birth.

And ever, through sunshine and cloud,
She guards the ancient holy flame,
And shares with all things fair and proud
Her radiant secret whence she came.

Hers are the dreams that once were Rome's,
No light nor flame shall she forget,
Deep in her secret catacombs
The Lord Christ's footsteps linger yet.

Older than Rome, through ages dark
She knew swift smiles and bitter tears,
And heard the singing of the lark
Self-conscious through ten thousand years.

Strong with a strange transfigured youth
The ages cannot break her wings,
She is the witness of the truth,
The guardian of immortal things.

Scant new light on her path is shed
She follows where the dreamers trod,
Behind the banners of the dead
Unto the temple of the God.

THE MAN WHO WOULD REMEMBER

"All of them marched into the plain of Lethe amidst dreadful heat and scorching. . . . When night came on they encamped beside the river Amalete whose waters no vessel contains. Of this water all of them must drink . . . and he who from time to time drinks forgets everything."—PLATO.

Parchèd and thirsty on the river bank,
In that pale meadow of the long since dead,
Amongst the waving poppy blooms he sank,
Deep in long grasses laid his weary head.

Here the dead passed, a pale and changing
throng,
The king, the priest, the fighter and the
knave,
The wronger and the sufferer of wrong,
The true, the false, the coward and the brave.

And many lingered by the sighing stream
And wept a little while ere they could part
With the sharp sword of wrath, or the
 bright dream,
Or the king's mantle folded round the heart.

Yea, even those whose sorrows craved an
 end
Shrank from the verge of that so dark
 relief,
And mourned the sad face of a dying friend
In the dim features of their fading grief.

The coward and the false, the foully slain,
The poor, forlorn, despised, shed bitter
 tears,
Clung to the memory of their withered pain
And folded round them all their heavy years.

MAN WHO WOULD REMEMBER 67

As Hector parted weeping from his bride
On that dark morn when Ilium's towers fell,
So did each mourner by sad Lethe's side
Unto his own soul say a long farewell.

Though many a one in that dim resting-
place
Did from a heavy burden find release,
Yet all men wept over the river's grace
Of fair oblivion and most blessed peace.

And he who would remember with sad
eyes
Watched the white stars burn forth his
horoscope,
And saw his soul, in many a strange
disguise,
Build up the baffled walls of light and hope.

Soft winds swayed rustling in the fringed
 reeds,
And gentle voices cried "Drink, dreamer,
 drink,
Go forth unhindered to the life of deeds,
Deep in the stream thy heavy burden
 sink."

A poet passed him singing in great praise
Of fair oblivion, the Eternal's grace
To those who toil along the rough earth ways,
From life to life, finding no resting-place.

He sang of moon-lit waters rippling cool,
And how one might forget this life of pain
And drown one's burden in deep Lethe's
 pool,
And be a little laughing child again.

MAN WHO WOULD REMEMBER 69

“ I will lay down,” he said, “ Remembrance
cold,
And all the store of dreams that once were
mine,
And thoughts and lives and wisdoms manifold,
For the restored light of my lost youth
divine.

A child among the children of the earth,
I will go forth and laugh and weep once more,
Remembering not the woes of death and
birth,
But a new soul with new worlds to explore.”

Then, at his word, the ever-mourning host
Saw the white fearlessness of life-to-be
Safe in the arms of every pallid ghost,
The promise of a new youth shadow-free.

And each one, clasping close the radiant
dream,

No more from the pale river's margin shrank.
Like ghostly willows bending o'er the stream
The silver shadows swayed and stooped and
drank.

Then did a voice speak in the dreamer's soul :
" Drink not, behold, the tears of all men flow.
Better set out for thine appointed goal
Dry-eyed and watchful, with thy haunting
woe.

Lest thou once more should be as thou
hast been,
Hold closely thy dead selves to be thy guides
To that lost treasure of the Light Unseen
That in the soul of every man abides.

MAN WHO WOULD REMEMBER 71

Who drinks of this dull tide must thirst
again,

For him are strife and peace and death and
birth,

The long monotonies of joy and pain
That bind men to the circle of the earth.

But he who seeks beyond the waves of sleep
The star that shines above the shadow-
strife,

Finds the lost stream, the well of waters
deep,

That springeth upward to Eternal Life.

His soul, deep set in the eternal mind,
A broken light in Saturn's star-strewn ring,
In blue transparent deeps of life shall find
The gulf of ages but a little thing.

He shall be one with all men's striving, one
With every passing hour and sorrowful fate,
Whose heart through centuries of wind and
sun

Is still a beggar at the ivory gate."

Then he who would remember, undismayed,
Laid down the lovely form of shining youth,
To the Eternal in the twilight prayed :
"I give my childhood for thine ageless
Truth."

SUNSET NEAR THE ROSSES

Mysteriously the last hour's opal light
Doth on the glamoured sea in peace descend,
The great winds fail, and gently comes the night,
The wild swans float on sunset waters bright.
All coloured tides and fire-born rhythms blend,
Intent the veil of mystery to rend
Where secret things glide upward into sight.
Poseidon tending his white flock of sheep
Has driven them downward to the twilight fold
And lulled each restless breaking wave to sleep ;
A thin cloud, wrapped about the sunset's gold,
O'er fallen waves a little rain doth weep ;
Surely the secret Lazarus never told
Lies buried somewhere in the silent deep.

THE HIDDEN PURPOSE

Silver the river flows out of the West—
Into the deeps of the ocean she flings
Her singing streams and her radiant springs—
Serenely she flows to her age-long rest.
Child of the hills and the green meadows' guest,
Here under the flash of the sea bird's wings
She learns the wild song that the free wind sings,
Great waves and new wonders surge in her breast.
Blue sweep her tides o'er the opaline shells,
For her joy no longer the primrose blows,
She scorns the high hills and the shadowy dells,
Forgetting the lily and false to the rose,
She is faithful unto her hidden wells
And straight to the heart of the deep she goes.

“WHERE GREAT WAVES BREAK”

Far from the downs and the safe farm lands
And the quiet meadows and comforting trees,
And the gladness of men who take their ease,
Where the tide flows over treacherous sands,
Earth fenced about with her sharp rocks stands,
With her waters gathered about her knees,
Where the breaking waves of impossible seas
Build up dream houses not made with hands—
The soil is scant and stubborn and bare,
There is light and to spare and yet not a sound
Save the surge of the wild sea everywhere ;
But the grimmest of rocks are folded round
By the glory of moving waters fair,
And where great waves break there is holy ground.

THE LOST COLOUR ¹

The small blue waves in the great flood of light
Break on sunk rocks and shiver and are still,
Whilst seas of gold flow onward with a will—
Great waves that break on the far mountain
height,

Or foam away through yellow cornfields bright,
Where to the sunlight strains each wind-swept
hill,

And earth holds up her cup for heaven to fill
With the clear glory of the gold and white.
Outcast from earth the ripples scattered lie,
Reflected, tossed back like a baffled prayer,
Gliding through silent pools of shining air,
Far from the broken sunbeams, high and dry
Above the green world, flooding everywhere
In deep lost lakes of blueness, the vast sky.

¹ From an essay of Tyndall's.

SHELLS

Cowries among the rocks the children find,
Sharp cut and shining in the sunset glow,
Eternal victims of the ebb and flow,
Moulded by rhythms of the mournful wind
In those deep waters, terrible and blind,
Where mighty waves draw out the under-tow,
And the sea's precious things drift to and fro,
And God moulds all things mortal to His mind.
Breaker of Waves, and Lord of the High Tide,
Has the long pilgrimage no end nor goal ?
Is there no peace here under the blue sky ?
Nothing but sand and storm and rock and shoal,
And the dark water's sullen heave and sigh,
The eternal tumult of the baffled soul ?

WAVES

Surely this life is as a flowing wave,
Foaming itself away on rock and shoal
And thundering into many a dark sea-cave
And finding many a dim mysterious goal
Where on black rocks the Atlantic breakers rave,
Shattering in wrath the sea's untroubled whole,
Or near the blue hill and white cairn of Maeve
Flinging on grey sands down a silver soul,
Waves of the world and children of the tide,
Broken and battered on earth's sharp set shore,
Were it not then much better to abide
Far from the endless elemental war,
In the sea's deep and silent heart to hide,
And break on the world's jagged edge no more ?

TRAGEDY

Dark earth of fading leaves and dying flowers
Behold, the blue and golden summer air,
And mighty waters moving everywhere,
And all the joy of sunshine and swift showers,
Are but the gentleness of kindly powers
That help us with cold strengthening hands to bear
Our restless doom and agonising share
Of the great sorrow of this birth of ours.
Yet in this world of waves and flashing wings
We dream awhile of lost and broken spheres,
And learn among life's deep mysterious springs
That pain is all the wisdom of our years,
And sorrow, deepest of life's hidden things,
From all men's eyes at last shall dry the tears.

KNOCKNAREA

Where silver lights and twilight shadows glide,
And the last coloured air grows tense and keen,
Floating aloft in the pale water's sheen
The mountains seem to rise out of the tide,
So blue it looks and near the other side
Of that great stretch of sea that lies between.
Though many meadows gold and white and green,
And grassy lawns, do on that far shore hide,
For all men's ways trodden of weary feet
By many pilgrims, up the mountain wind,
Past fields of barley and deep golden wheat :
Some on the haunted cairn still hope to find
The light of dreams, and some but dig for peat
Where the high hills hold fire for all mankind.

BY THE SEA

The people who live in the Midlands know
How to build cities and temples and towers
And live fair lives in gardens of flowers
Where round their windows the roses blow.
But we, who can neither reap nor sow,
Find little enough in the land that is ours ;
We have lost touch of the green earth's
powers ;

The tides of our being ebb and flow
With those lonely waters that all men shun.
We seek the swift current's secret goal :
Ours are the dreams that are many and one,
The waves that shatter the sea that is whole,
The spirit's rhythm of wind and sun,
And eternal broken waves of the soul.

WALLS

Free to all souls the hidden beauty calls,
The sea thrift dwelling on her spray-swept height,
The lofty rose, the low-grown aconite,
The gliding river and the stream that brawls
Down the sharp cliffs with constant breaks and
falls—

All these are equal in the equal light—
All waters mirror the one Infinite.
God made a garden, it was men built walls ;
But the wide sea from men is wholly freed :
Freely the great waves rise and storm and break,
Nor softer go for any land-lord's need,
Where rhythmic tides flow for no miser's sake
And none hath profit of the brown sea-weed,
But all things give themselves, yet none may take.

THE VAGRANT'S ROMANCE

(A REINCARNATION PHANTASY)

This was the story never told
By one who cared not for the world's gold.

One of the idle and unwise,
A beggar with unfathomable eyes.

One who had nothing but dreams to give
To men who are eager to labour and live.

For the world in its wisdom deep and dim
Had taken all pleasure and treasure from
him.

This was the story his soul could tell,
Immortal and unfathomable.

There was no record in his brain,
He did not know he should live again.

But there was one who read the whole,
Buried deep in a dead man's soul.

“ In the days of Atlantis, under the wave,
I was a slave, the child of a slave.

When the towers of Atlantis fell,
I died and was born again in hell.

From that sorrowful prison I did escape
And hid myself in a hero's shape.

But few years had I of love or joy,
A Trojan I fell at the Siege of Troy.

I came again in a little while,
An Israelite slave on the banks of the Nile.

THE VAGRANT'S ROMANCE 85

Then did I comfort my grief-laden heart
With the magic lore and Egyptian art.

Fain was I to become Osiris then,
But soon I came back to the world of men.

By the Ganges I was an outcast born,
A wanderer and a child of scorn.

By the waters of Babylon I wept,
My harp amongst the willows slept.

In the land of Greece I opened my eyes,
To reap the fields of Plotinus the Wise.

When the great light shattered the world's
closed bars,

I was a shepherd who gazed at the stars.

For lives that were lonely, obscure, apart,
I thank the Hidden One, in my heart,

That always and always under the sun
I went forth to battle and never won.

A slayer of men, I was doomed to abide,
For ever and aye, on the losing side.

Whenever I dream of the wonderful goal,
I thank the hidden God in my soul

That though I have always been meanly
 born,
A tiller of earth and a reaper of corn,

Whenever through ages past and gone
The light divine for a moment shone,

Whenever piercing laborious night
A ray fell straight from the Light of Light,

Whenever amid fierce lightning and storm
The divine moved in a human form,

THE VAGRANT'S ROMANCE 87

Whenever the earth in her cyclic course
Shook at the touch of an unknown force,

Whenever the cloud of dull years grew thin
And a great star called to the light within,

I have braved storm and labour and sun
To stand at the side of that Holy One.

No matter how humble my birth has been,
There are few who have seen what I have
seen.

Mine the shepherd's star and the reaper's
reward,
And the dream of him who fell by the sword.

One thing I have learned the long years
through,
To know the false words from the true.

The slave who toiled on the banks of the
Nile

With wisdom gladdened his long exile.

From Buddha at eve by the Ganges' side
An outcast learnt the worth of the world's
pride.

To the tired reaper, when day was done,
Did Plotinus unveil the hidden sun.

Amongst the stars, on a Syrian night,
A ragged shepherd found the Light of Light.

From dream to dream, o'er valley and hill,
I followed the Lord Christ's wandering will.

Kings there are who would barter a throne
For the long day's toil and the light
unknown,

THE VAGRANT'S ROMANCE 89

The deed of the strong and the word of the
wise,

And the night under cold and starry skies—

The white light of dawn on the hillside shed
On Him who had nowhere to lay His head.

Behold there are kings who would change
with me,

For the love of the ancient mystery.

Shepherd and reaper and slave I have been,
There are few who have seen what I have
seen.

I have been a gipsy since those days,
And lived again in the wild wood ways.

Wise with the lore of those hidden things,
Learnt from Lord Christ in His wanderings,

Beggar and reaper and shepherd and slave,
I am one who rests not in any grave ;

I will follow each stormy light divine,
And the secret of all things shall be mine.

These things have I seen, would you bid
me mourn

That I was never an Emperor born ? ”

HARVEST

Though the long seasons seem to separate
Sower and reaper or deeds dreamed and
done,

Yet when a man reaches the Ivory Gate
Labour and life and seed and corn are one.

Because thou art the doer and the deed,
Because thou art the thinker and the
thought,

Because thou art the helper and the need,
And the cold doubt that brings all things to
nought.

Therefore in every gracious form and shape
The world's dear open secret shalt thou find,
From the One Beauty there is no escape
Nor from the sunshine of the Eternal mind.

The patient labourer, with guesses dim,
Follows this wisdom to its secret goal.
He knows all deeds and dreams exist in him,
And all men's God in every human soul.

THE ANTI-SUFFRAGIST

The princess in her world-old tower pined
A prisoner, brazen-caged, without a gleam
Of sunlight, or a windowful of wind ;
She lived but in a long lamp-lighted dream.

They brought her forth at last when she
was old ;

The sunlight on her blanchèd hair was shed
Too late to turn its silver into gold.

“ Ah, shield me from this brazen glare ! ”
she said.

THE VISION OF NIAMH

Niamh was perhaps the Uranian Aphrodite of Irish legend—the goddess of remote and spiritual beauty.

Life grows so clear, beneath the dreaming
lamp,

I can see through the darkness of the grave,
How long ago in her high mountain camp
The stars shone on the stormy soul of Maeve.

And leaning from the shadow of a star
With hands outstretched to hold the hands
of clay,

One looked into her spirit fairer far
Than sun or moon of any mortal day.

THE VISION OF NIAMH 95

Oh Niamh, thou art child of the dim hours
Between the day and night, when Summer
flings

A little flashing dew on the wild flowers,
And all the starlight glimmers in thy wings.

Thou sorrow of lost beauty, thou strange
queen

Who calls to men's souls out of twilight seas,
Whose white hands break the stars in
silver sheen,

Whose voice is as the wind in the fir trees.

For thee Maeve left her kingdom and her
throne,

And all the gilded wisdom of the wise,
And dwelt among the hazel trees alone
So that she might look into Niamh's eyes.

No sorrow of lost battles any more
In her enchanted spirit could abide ;
Straight she forgot the long and desolate
war,
And how Fionavar for pity died.

Ah, Niamh, still the starry lamp burns
bright,
I can see through the darkness of the grave,
How long ago thy soul of starry light
Was very dear to the brave soul of Maeve.

THE PROMISE OF SPEED

Drive faster, the spirit out of the vast
Stands in the storm knocking at the heart's
door,
There's a truce, there's a truce in the
ancient war,
And my heart and my soul are at peace at
last.

Fast follow the clouds on their wind-driven
wings,
The white road writhes under our rushing
wheels,
And rent with fierce rapture the air reveals
The innermost truth at the heart of things.

Now, through the torn sunlight and shaken
blue air,
Waves of the fury and storm of our speed,
Thrill to the heart of the hard world's
need,
Break on the stones of the earth's despair.

Light shines in the body's innermost glooms,
The senses thrill, with mysterious power,
The deeps of the heart where a magic
flower
In a rapture of life and laughter blooms.

Dark element rushing forth into light
In the crumbling brain and the vanishing
fire,
She shall not die with the dead desire ;
She shall not abide in the shades of night.

THE PROMISE OF SPEED 99

Blue sky, the immortal design of her !
In thy gleam is her dream-power manifest,
To build up a palace fit for her guest,
A prison fit for her prisoner.

Therefore, long after the last disgrace
Of ashes to ashes and earth to earth,
She stands at the gate of the second
birth,
She too is of proud eternal race.

She who was one with the grass and the
weed
Shall be one with the sunshine, one with the
soul,
One with the restless illuminate Whole,
One with the flower who was one with the
seed.

She who was one with the wind and the
storm,

One with the whirling and glittering stars,
Shall break through the elemental bars
And fold her white dreams in the Ultimate
Form.

She who swayed in the shadows and flashed
in the sun,

And danced with the hail on the desolate
plain,

And rose in the rainbow and fell in the rain,
Shall be gathered at last to the deeps of the
One.

She who lay dark at the roots of the flowers
Shall soar with the White May and shine
with the Rose,

And gleam in the River of Life that flows
Deep under the Spirit's embattled towers.

THE PROMISE OF SPEED 101

She who was one with the broken sod,
One with the worm and one with the dust,
One with the terror, one with the trust,
Shall be one with the radiant and lightning-
winged god.

Oh, dim burns the lamp of the Infinite !
In the unknown Spirit's innermost shrine
Does the little candle of this world shine ;
No shadowy power can quench the frailest
light.

No man shall sever the part from the whole,
Nought shall be refuse or thrown away,
The sculptor shall never forget the clay,
The Body knocks at the door of the Soul.



THE ROMANCE OF MAEVE

The harvest is scant, and the labourer,
Returning at sunset with so few sheaves,
Has gathered gold bracken and silver fir
And boughs of the elm and the brown beech
leaves.

Fuel enough for the evening blaze,
When the blue of the sky grows wintry and
pale,
And the pilgrim home from the wild wood
ways
Can read by the fire an ancient tale :

How a great Queen could cast away her
crown,

The tumult of her high victorious pride,

To rest among the scattered fir-cones brown

And watch deep waters through the moon-
light glide.

“ I ”

“ All this is threaded on Me as jewels on a string.”

Bhagavad Gita.

If I could be one with the waves of grief
That break on the earth's unquiet shores,
One with belief and unbelief,
The digger of graves and the maker of wars,
One with the passionate dreams of the brave,
One with the changing and idle throng,
One with the tyrant, one with the slave,
I should be one with the whole world's
song.

One with the rising and falling tides,
The guiding stars and the perilous deep,
One with the opal shadow that glides
Over the blue-lit mountain steep.

One with the flash of storm-driven wings,
 One with the river of light that flows
 Over the meanest of trivial things
 Into the heart of the wild rose.

My heart would be as the moonlight still,
 The silver light on the cold night wind,
 The soul of good in the evil will,
 The dream of peace in the painful mind.

If I could lose myself in the whole,
 My soul in the sunshine, my heart in the
 storm,
 I should find peace in the human soul,
 And the spirit of God in a human form.

CLEOPATRA'S PEARL

In the deep world unseen,
Under the wash of the tide,
On bright sands coraline
Did the pearl of pearls abide
Till the Queen's valiant slave,
He who had eaten her bread,
Sank down through the blue wave
To the land of the white and red,
The land where no man may embalm
Or bury the wandering dead.

The evil sharks in the bay
Waited in vain to kill.
More swift and subtle than they,
The fisherman had his will.

The pearl that shone in the Queen's hair
Brought light from the shades profound.
The fisher had night for his share :
Yea, the pearl fisher was drowned,
And clasped in his rigid hand was the glory
Of Egypt found.

Ah, the Queen had a crown of gold !
Such a pearl for her crown !
With a bitter acid and cold,
She has melted it down.
Hers was the precious draft,
White from the shades of night ;
And the fisherman's broken raft
Lies buried and out of sight.
But deep in the diver's soul burns clear
The lost pearl's hidden light.

Erratum.

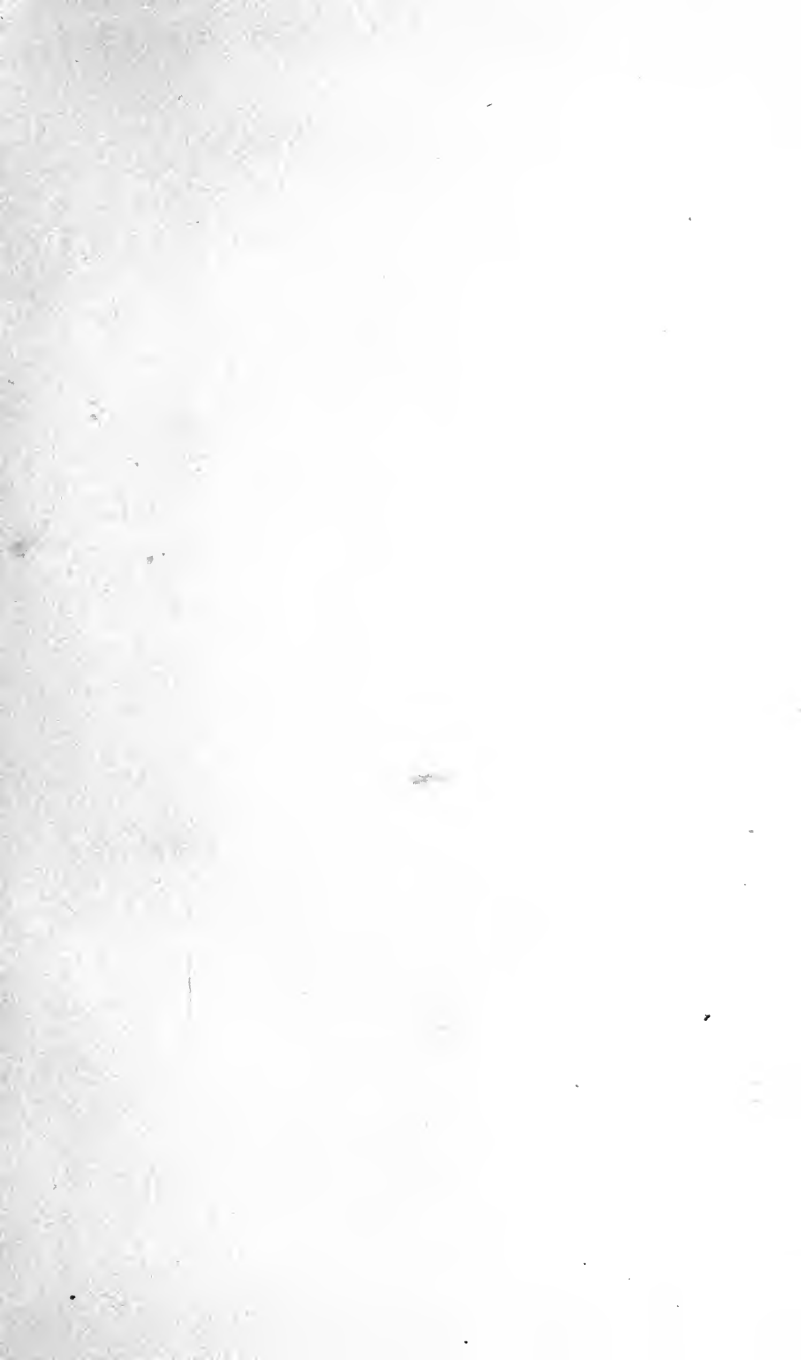
“ Cleopatra's Pearl ” (pp. 106, 107). The ninth and tenth lines of each verse should be read as one line.



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